

Message Text

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TO USDEL SECRETARY IMMEDIATE

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NODIS

CHEROKEE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OVIP (KISSINGER, HENRY A.), PFOR, IS

SUBJECT: MORE ON DINITZ AND C-130S

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM EAGLEBURGER

1. THIS IS DICTATED IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING OUR TELEPHONE CONVERSATION SO I WILL NOT BORE YOU WITH EXCESSIVE DETAIL.
2. DINITZ CALLED BACK SHORTLY BEFORE YOU CALLED ME AND PROVIDED ME WITH A LENGTHY AND NOT TERRIBLY CLEAR EXPLANATION OF THE CLEARANCE PROCESS FOR THE C-130. IN SHORT, IT NOW APPEARS THAT THE ISRAELIS WERE GIVEN A DIPLOMATIC CLEARANCE BY PROTOCOL BUT IT WAS POINTED OUT TO THEM AT THE TIME THAT THIS IN NO WAY COMMITTED US TO ANY SPECIFIC MILITARY PORT OF CALL AND THAT THIS CLEARANCE HAD TO BE RECEIVED FROM THE RELEVANT MILITARY DEPARTMENT. WHILE THE ISRAELIS APPARENTLY WERE TOLD BY THE NAVY THAT THEY WERE HOPEFUL THAT CLEARANCE FOR THE AIRCRAFT TO PROCEED TO NORFOLK WOULD BE FORTHCOMING, IT IS CLEAR THAT THE ISRAELIS WERE NOT REPEAT NOT TOLD THAT THE CLEARANCE TO GO TO NORFOLK HAD BEEN GRANTED. IN ADDITION, AS INDICATED IN MY EARLIER TELEGRAM, THE ISRAELIS HAD GIVEN THE WRONG

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CASE NUMBER SO THAT EVEN THE "PROCESS" OF GRANTING A

MILITARY CLEARANCE FOR NORFOLK WAS PROCEEDING ON AN INCORRECT ASSUMPTION AS TO THE MATERIAL TO BE AIRLIFTED TO ISRAEL.

3. DINITZ HAS NOW GOTTEN HIMSELF ALL WORKED UP ON THIS ISSUE AND PLED WITH ME FOR SOME FIVE MINUTES TODAY TO SEEK TO PERSUADE YOU TO PERMIT THE AIRCRAFT TO RETURN TO ISRAEL WITH THE WALLEYE BOMBS. HE SAID THAT NO MATTER HOW MUCH THE ISRAELIS MIGHT TRY TO PREVENT IT, THE RETURN OF AN EMPTY AIRCRAFT TO ISRAEL WOULD INEVITABLY BECOME A PRESS STORY. HE WENT ON TO GUARANTEE THAT THERE WOULD BE NO LEAK FROM THE GOI SHOULD WE AGREE TO SHIP THE WALLEYE BOMBS. HE CLOSED BY SAYING THAT HE WANTED TO REASSURE YOU THAT THIS WAS NOT AN ILL-INTENTIONED OR ILL-CONCEIVED OPERATION AND THAT THERE WAS NO GOI ATTEMPT TO EMBARRASS THE USG IMMEDIATELY PRIOR TO THE SADAT/FORD MEETING.

4. I TOLD DINITZ THAT I WOULD REPORT THE ABOVE TO YOU BUT SAID THAT I COULD NOT AUTHORIZE THE PLANE TO RETURN TO ISRAEL WITH THE BOMBS AND VERY MUCH DOUBTED THAT YOU WERE GOING TO BE PREPARED TO CHANGE THE DECISION.

5. ON THE BASIS OF OUR TELEPHONE CONVERSATION THIS AFTER-NOON, I INTEND TO CALL DINITZ IN THE MORNING (I THINK IT WOULD BE USEFUL TO LET HIM SWEAT OVERNIGHT) AND TELL HIM THE FOLLOWING:

(A) THE PRESIDENT HAS DECIDED THAT THE BOMBS MAY NOT REPEAT NOT BE FLOWN TO ISRAEL AS DINITZ HAS REQUESTED.

(B) A DECISION ON THE SHIPMENT AND MODE OF TRANSPORT OF THE BOMBS WILL BE MADE AS SOON AS THE PRESIDENT RETURNS FROM HIS TRIP.

(C) THE ISRAELIS HAVE TWO CHOICES: (1) THEY CAN KEEP THE PLANE IN THE UNITED STATES UNTIL SUCH TIME AS A DECISION ON DELIVERY OF THE BOMBS HAS BEEN MADE IN THE HOPE THAT THEY CAN THEN USE THE AIRCRAFT TO TRANSPORT THE BOMBS TO ISRAEL; (2) THEY CAN RETURN THE PLANE EMPTY TO ISRAEL. SHOULD THEY DECIDE UPON THIS LATTER COURSE, AND SHOULD THE
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FACT THAT THE PLANE HAS RETURNED TO ISRAEL EMPTY APPEAR IN THE NEWSPAPERS, IT WILL HAVE TO BE ANOTHER ITEM ENTERED IN THE CATALOGUE OF UNFRIENDLY ISRAELI ACTS.

5. I KNOW I AM BEGINNING TO SOUND LIKE AN APOLOGIST FOR DINITZ BUT NEVERTHELESS MUST SAY THAT EITHER HE IS A VERY GOOD ACTOR OR WHEN I FIRST RAISED THE ISSUE WITH HIM THIS MORNING, HE DID NOT REPEAT NOT KNOW ABOUT IT. THAT IN NO

WAY GOES TO THE QUESTION OF WHETHER THE ISRAELIS ARE DELIBERATELY SEEKING TO EMBARRASS US. THAT CAN BE MANAGED AS WELL FROM JERUSALEM AS IT CAN FROM WASHINGTON.

6. ONE THING IS CLEAR: WE NEED TO REVAMP OUR CLEARANCE PROCEDURES FOR FLIGHTS OF THIS SORT TO ASSURE THAT WE KNOW WHAT THE ISRAELIS ARE COMING TO PICK UP AND WHY BEFORE WE ISSUE FLIGHT CLEARANCES. ROY ATHERTON HAS ALREADY TAKEN STEPS TO ASSURE THAT HE IS CONSULTED ON ALL SUCH CASES COMING TO THE ATTENTION OF NEA IN THE FUTURE AND WILL WORK WITH GEORGE VEST TO SEE THAT THE INTERDEPARTMENTAL CLEARANCE PROCESS IS ALSO STRENGTHENED.

7. IN THE ABSENCE OF WORD FROM YOU TO THE CONTRARY, I WILL PLAN TO PASS ON TO DINITZ THE RESPONSE CONTAINED IN PARAGRAPH 5 ABOVE AT ABOUT NOON TOMORROW WASHINGTON TIME.

8. ONE FINAL POINT: WE ARE TRYING TO FIND OUT NOW WHETHER THERE IS ANY OTHER CARGO THAT COULD BE PUT ON THE C-130 IN ORDER TO AVOID THE "EMPTY AIRCRAFT" STORY. I WILL NOT KNOW UNTIL SOMETIME TOMORROW WHAT IF ANYTHING IS AVAILABLE. INGERSOLL

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